

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 02953 141146Z

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0939

S E C R E T LISBON 2953

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FOR EUR-HARTMANN FROM CARLUCCI

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MARR PO

SUBJECT: AZORES BASE NEGOTIATIONS: RECOMMENDATION

REFS: (A) LISBON 2900 (DTG 121407Z APR 77),

(B) LISBON 2940 (DTG 131712Z APR 77)

SUMMARY. IN MY JUDGEMENT, WE HAVE AN UNPARALLELED OPPORTUNITY TO REACH A FAVORABLE AZORES AGREEMENT QUICKLY. TO DO SO, HOWEVER, WILL REQUIRE SOME FAST ACTION BY US. END SUMMARY

1. I WANT TO FLAG REFTELS FOR YOU PERSONALLY. AS I SEE IT, GOP POSITION ON LAJES BEING SIGNALLED TO US IS:
-- GOP WANTS SMOOTH, QUICK AGREEMENT (NO "IMPASSE" PER FONMIN).
-- ISRAELI RESUPPLY ISSUE MAY NOT ARISE. FONMIN HAS STUDIOUSLY AVOIDED MENTIONING THIS TO ME. SO HAVE OTHER EMBASSY CONTACTS. GOP IS PREPARING TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL.
-- QUID SHOULD NOT BE A MAJOR PROBLEM. IN EFFECT GOP IS SAYING: "TELL US WHAT YOU ARE REASONABLE PREPARED TO OFFER AND WE'LL ACCEPT IT AFTER SOME DISCUSSION." THEY ASSUME, OF COURSE, THAT OUR OFFER WILL BE SUFFICIENT FOR THEM TO MAINTAIN FACE POLITICALLY.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 LISBON 02953 141146Z

-- AZOREANS ARE RELATIVELY UNDER CONTROL. THIS IS RELATED BOTH TO SIZE OF QUID--BULK OF WHICH HAS BEEN EARMARKED FOR ISLANDS--AND TO SOARES'S DETERMINATION NOT TO GIVE AN ISSUE TO SA CARNEIRO'S PSD WHICH CONTROLS AZOREAN REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION.

2. IF THIS ANALYSIS OF THE GOP POSITION IS CORRECT WE

HAVE AN UNPARALLELED OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE A QUICK, PAINLESS RENEWAL OF OUR AZORES FACILITIES. THE RFE/RL CONTRACT RENEWAL IS RELEVANT HERE. I BELIEVE SOARES HAS BEEN GIVEN SAME TYPE OF POLITICAL GREEN-LIGHT ON LAJES.

3. WHAT WE NEED TO DO NOW, IN MY JUDGEMENT, IS TO MOVE FAST. WE DO NOT HAVE TO WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT MODALITIES AND FORM. WE DO HAVE TO DEVELOP QUICKLY A CONCRETE QUID PACKAGE FOR VILAS BOAS TO BRING BACK TO LISBON. IN FACT, I'D BET MY TENNIS SHOES THAT IF THE SECRETARY WERE ABLE TO PRESENT A REASONABLY FIRM PACKAGE TO SOARES, WE COULD GET HIS AGREEMENT TO IT IN PRINCIPLE.

4. HOW MUCH? I'D SAY YOUR IDEA OF 100 MILLION, POSSIBLY A BIT MORE, IS IN THE BALL PARK. TERMINATING THE AID PROGRAM IN FY 78 MEANS THE INCREMENTAL COST ISN'T THAT MUCH. MOREOVER THE AZORES AID CAN CONTRIBUTE TO OUR OVERALL GOALS OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STABILITY. I WOULD SUGGEST ABOUT 60 MILLION IN PROJECT AID FOR THE AZORES--PORT FACILITIES, TRANSPORTATION, GEOTHERMAL POWER AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS--AND 60 MILLION FOR NATO RELATED AIR FORCE MODERNIZATION.

5. ANOTHER REASON FOR QUICK AND FIRM RESPONSE TO PORTUGUESE SIGNALS IS "CONSORTIUM" LOAN. CURRENT STATUS OF LOAN GIVES US MAXIMUM LEVERAGE. AND RELATIVE QUIET ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI FRONT ALSO MAKES IT EASIER FOR PORTUGUESE TO MOVE NOW.

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SECRET

PAGE 03 LISBON 02953 141146Z

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